

STATE OF ALASKA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
AND PUBLIC FACILITIES  
DIVISION OF STATEWIDE PLANNING

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

3132 CHANNEL DRIVE  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-7898  
PHONE: (907) 465-4070  
TEXT: (907) 465-3652  
FAX: (907) 465-6984

May 14, 2002

Mr. Steve Hicks  
City Clerk/Treasurer  
City of Cold Bay  
P.O. Box 10  
Cold Bay, AK 99571

**Subject: Comments from Cold Bay re: Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan**

Dear Mr. Hicks:

Thank you for your letter of March 25. We appreciate your comments for improving the plan and the additional information you have provided concerning Cold Bay's transportation needs. You raised several points that we will address in order.

**"Surface" includes marine and/or overland**

Your comments seemed to take issue with our use of the term "surface transportation link between the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay" as necessarily implying a link by land. This is not the case. It is clearly defined in the legal and regulatory use of the term to mean on the land and/or on the water. Federal transportation regulations provide for use of surface transportation funding, with some restrictions, for both roads and ferries.

The *King Cove - Cold Bay Facilities Concept Report and Assessment of Transportation Need* evaluated single mode (ferry or hovercraft) and dual mode (road and ferry/hovercraft) alternatives, with the understanding that a road through the Izembek NWR was not on the table for evaluation. The Southwest Plan continues to validate the need for a solution without spelling out how to implement it.

We acknowledge Cold Bay's preference for a ferry system link over the hovercraft link suggested in the study. Your comment "if a road was to be constructed its maintenance and upkeep would be too great for the locals to bear," while it may be valid by itself, goes counter to your preference for a local ferry system, whose maintenance, upkeep and operation would be many times greater still.

**Cold Bay population estimate does not affect plan recommendations**

Thank you for the information you provided concerning the community's assessment of population and economic growth. We will review the figure for Cold Bay before publishing the final plan. We acknowledge the limitations of the plan's population forecasting method for individual communities. As to forecasting regional transportation demand, we stand by it. On page S-8 the draft plan allows for reconsideration of need should actual population growth significantly deviate from the estimate.

Cold Bay's very capable airport amplifies its significance in regional transportation far in excess of its own small population. Even a doubling of the 2020 population estimate for Cold Bay would not affect the plan's recommendations.

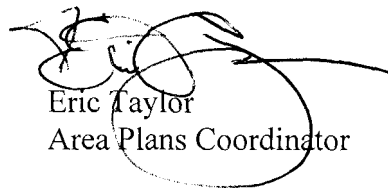
**Final plan will assume *Tustumena* service to Cold Bay**

The final version of the plan will drop the draft plan assumption on page 20 that the *Tustumena* will call only at King Cove. While such a schedule change is ultimately an operational decision, it hinges on local transportation solutions that we as yet cannot predict with any implied certainty. So we will continue to plan on the basis of stops in both communities.

We appreciate your comments on the particular value of seasonal monthly Alaska Marine Highway service to Cold Bay.

Thanks again for your valued contributions to the Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan.

Sincerely,



Eric Taylor  
Area Plans Coordinator